

Appl. No. 09/829,879
Amendment dated: December 6, 2004
Reply to the Office Action of Nov. 8, 2004

REMARKS

In response to the final office action dated June 8, 2004 and the advisory action dated November 8, 2004, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration based on the above claim amendment and the following remarks. Claims 1-16 are pending in the present application and claims 1-7 and 14-16 were rejected. Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's indication that claims 8-13 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 1 and 7-10 have been amended, and claims 6, 11 and 15-16 have been canceled without prejudice. No new matter has been added by the amendment. Applicant respectfully submits that the claims as presented are in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-7 and 14-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ichimura, US 6,188,831 (hereinafter "Ichimura") and Maeda et al., US 5,412,775 (hereinafter "Maeda") for the reasons stated on pages 2-8 of the Office Action. Since claims 6, 11 and 15-16 have been canceled without prejudice, the rejection of claims 6, 11 and 15-16 is moot.

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of the canceled claim 11, which the Examiner indicated includes allowable subject matter. Thus, claim 1 is believed to be patentable over the combination of Ichimura and Maeda. Claims 8-10 have been rewritten in independent form, as suggested by the Examiner. Thus, claims 8-10 are believed to be allowable. Claims 2-5 and 7 depend from claim 1, and claims 12-13 depend from claim 9. Thus, these claims are believed to be allowable due to their dependency on claims 1 and 9.

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In view of the forgoing amendments and remarks, Applicant submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Early notification to this effect is requested.

If there are any charges due in connection with this response, please charge them to Deposit Account 06-1130.

Respectfully submitted,
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